

SAIPAR at 20: Looking Back with Muna Ndulo

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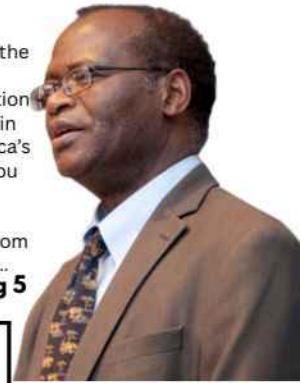
In an interview with the Newsletter team, Muna looked back on SAIPAR's humble beginnings, the commitment and dedication of a team that values of honesty, rigour, and integrity that built the research powerhouse we know today.

Below is the transcript of the interview:

Q. What inspired the creation of SAIPAR and what gap in Zambia and Southern Africa's policy landscape were you trying to address?

A. The inspiration came from discussions with some ...

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SAIPAR HONOURS SUPREME COURT



L-r Chanda Chungu, Irish Ambassador to Zambia Aidan Fitzpatrick, Dr. Pamela Towela Sambo and Dr. O'Brien Kaaba during the book launch on October 21, 2025

About three years of hard work came to fruition on October 21, 2025 when SAIPAR launched a book entitled "The Supreme Court of Zambia at Fifty, Looking Back and Going Forward".

In this publication, SAIPAR brought together leading legal scholars and practitioners to produce a landmark publication which examines how the Court has shaped Zambia's legal and constitutional landscape.

The book, which was edited by Pamela Towela Sambo, O'Brien Kaaba and Chanda Chungu, explores the court's jurisprudence across a wide spectrum; from human rights and public health to environmental protection and constitutional interpretation, tracing how its decisions have...

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EVERY OTHER
WEDNESDAY

14:00



EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the SAIPAR Newsletter.

This publication reflects SAIPAR's commitment to strengthening evidence-based policy dialogue and making research more accessible to practitioners, decision-makers, and the wider public. In an environment where governance challenges are increasingly complex, we believe that rigorous analysis, grounded in African realities, remains essential to informing meaningful reform.

Through this newsletter, we share key research findings, project updates, policy insights, and reflections from across our programmes, including Law and Justice, Economics and Development, and Politics and Social Change. Our aim is not only to inform, but also to stimulate constructive debate and collaboration around issues that shape Zambia's and the region's development trajectory.

This issue brings together stories and insights that reflect our drive to inform, inspire, and spark meaningful conversations. To commemorate 20 years of SAIPAR, Muna Ndulo reflects on the journey so far. As we continue to grow, so does our commitment to clarity, curiosity, and community.

We hope you find something here that stays with you long after you turn the page.

Thank you for spending your time with us.

With best wishes,
Mukosha Funga
Editor, SAIPAR Newsletter

Legal scholars exchange ideas at Judiciary and Democracy in Africa Conference

Imagine being an extrovert; energised by people, conversation, and community, only to step into a role that suddenly isolates you from the very spaces that once grounded you. Where even a simple walk or jog through the neighbourhood becomes a calculated choice, because at any moment, someone might stop you, confront you, or demand your attention. How would you hold on to a sense of normalcy?

For many judges, this isn't a hypothetical scenario. It is the quiet, often unseen reality of their daily lives.

During the Judiciary and Democracy in Africa Conference, which was organised by the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) and the African Judiciaries Research Network (AJRN),

on October 21, Gabrielle Lynch presented her ongoing research titled "Judges Off-Bench: How judges understand their role in a democratic society" which seeks to understand the impact of what judges in Kenya and Zambia do when they're off the bench and what these activities say about how they understand their roles.

Lynch's paper wasn't the only thought-provoking presentation. In fact, the conference brought together legal scholars from Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and the UK to share ideas on various topics including Judicial Integrity and Ethics, Human Rights Adjudication and Constitution Making and Electoral Justice...

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Legal scholars exchange ideas at Judiciary and Democracy in Africa Conference



Gabrielle Lynch

The conference was opened by SAIPAR Board Chairperson Vincent Malambo, SC, who ceased the moment to call for more transparency in how judges are disciplined. He said, "...This secretive nature of the process of holding judges accountable really needs to be looked at

seriously and I think that you as researchers need to get to work on things like this and try and propose, argue against any form of secretiveness in holding anybody accountable. The reports must, in my view be made public so the members of the public can know exactly what judge so and so as disciplined in the manner that they were."



Onthatile Olerile Moeti

Other papers presented were:

1. *Paying Judges in Zambia: He who plays the piper calls the tune?* **O'Brien Kaaba**, University of Zambia/ SAIPAR
2. *From norms to verdicts: Zambian courts and international human rights law.* **Mweshi Charmaine Chibangulula**, Judiciary of Zambia



Baboki Jonathan Dambe



Tininenji Banda

3. *Vindicating women's human rights in Botswana:he contribution of the Judiciary,* **Onthatile Olerile Moeti**, University of Botswana
4. *Gender and disability considerations in sentencing in Malawi,* **Gift Dorothy Makanje**, University of Malawi
5. *The Judiciary as arbiter and actor: Judicial independence and accountability in Zambia's democratic framework.* **James Chimbala**, (SAIPAR).
6. *Judicial protection of refugee rights in Zambia: The role of courts in safeguarding Human Rights.* **Jephason Kalengo**, (University of Zambia)
7. *A critical examination of the judiciary's role in enhancing democracy through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.* **Kachana Katazo**, University of Zambia
8. *Rethinking judicial engagement with customary law in Zambia: Toward a community-driven legal pluralism,* **Raymond Mwendabai Lubinda**
9. *Insurmountable Mount Kilimanjaro? Ameliorating the standard of proof in election petitions in Kenya.* **Joshua Malidzo Nyawa**, Kenya School of Law
10. *The Approach of Botswana's judiciary to the interpretation of electoral laws: Justified restraint or undue deference?* **Baboki Jonathan Dambe and Olebile Daphney Muzila**, University of Botswana
11. *The Courts' Role in promoting access to justice for people with communication disabilities in South Africa.* **Mahlubandile Ntontela**, Nelson Mandela University
12. *Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming how information is created, disseminated, and presented in legal proceedings.* **Tininenji Banda**, SAIPAR.
13. *Silencing the silencers: Free speech, Ubuntu, and Africa's judicial gag principle examining the justiciability of executive conduct and prerogative powers in Zambia,* **Dunia P. Zongwe**, University of Namibia.
14. *Between ratification and realisation: Strengthening the role of Constitution Making as an ongoing conversation.* **Nebert Chirwa**, University of Malawi.
15. *Examining the justiciability of executive conduct and prerogative powers in Zambia.* **Chanda Chungu**, University of Zambia.
16. *The role of the judiciary in a democracy: Judicial activism in the age of environmental crisis.* **Clement Ngoma and Ulrich Kauert**, Copperbelt University.
17. *The Role of the judiciary in democracy: Focus on environmental jurisprudence.* **Nkazana Musokotwane**, GATBRO International Limited.
18. *A judicial call to action: Conquering the science of climate change and asserting human rights through litigation.* **Pamela Towela Sambo and Likando Faith Aongola**, University of Zambia.

We look forward to the completion of all these inspiring papers.



Irish Ambassador to Zambia Aidan Fitzpatrick (c) poses for a photo with delegates at the conference

From Research to Implementation: How SAIPAR is Redefining Policy Engagement

Policy research only matters when it shapes real decisions. In 2025, the Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) deliberately set out to close the long-standing gap between evidence and action by working within governance systems rather than commenting from the sidelines.

Reflecting on 2025 during a recent appearance on the Money FM Breakfast Show, SAIPAR's Director for Strategy, Monitoring and Projects, Caesar Cheelo, explained that through the Ford Foundation-funded Zambia Democratic Governance (ZDG) Project, the Institute positioned itself as a delivery-oriented policy partner. The focus was on strengthening how policy is designed, implemented, and evaluated within public institutions.

Through the ZDG Project, SAIPAR partnered with key government bodies, including the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, and the Zambia Development Agency.

The emphasis was practical rather than theoretical. Interventions focused on strengthening macroeconomic modelling, supporting economic and political diplomacy, improving decentralised development processes, and addressing investment and farm-block challenges. Across all these areas, learning was central; identifying gaps, understanding what works, and designing future interventions that move beyond research into implementation.

As Cheelo observed, while politics often dominates national conversation, it is economics and governance that ultimately determine livelihoods. Jobs, inflation, service delivery, and local development outcomes are shaped far more by institutional performance than by political rhetoric.



l-r Caesar Cheelo, MLGRD Permanent Secretary Gabriel Pollen, MLGRD Director Planning Martin Sodala and MLGRD assistant director local government administration Jimmy Chulu during a public discussion forum on CDF

CDF as a Governance Test Case

SAIPAR's work on the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) offered a practical illustration of supporting decentralisation in action.

Cheelo noted that while CDF represents a bold policy shift, it remains a work in progress. In particular, the rapid increase in allocations was not initially matched by constituency-level capacity; especially in remote areas with limited education, connectivity, electricity, and ICT infrastructure. As a result, utilisation rates were initially low, averaging between 30 and 40 percent in 2022 and 2023. However, as administrative capacity improved and awareness increased within districts and constituencies, utilisation has risen significantly. Young people, in particular, are now more informed, motivated, and confident in engaging with CDF processes.

Speaking at a SAIPAR Public Discussion Forum held on 17th December, 2025, Gabriel Pollen, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development,

acknowledged that the programme experienced early teething problems.

He noted that government is now addressing these challenges, including plans to strengthen financial literacy and competency among loan beneficiaries.

"This is the first time such a programme is being implemented in a country that has existed as a republic for 61 years. The past few years have been a learning curve. While there have been teething problems from both loan holders and institutions, we have gone a long way in identifying the real challenges and how to resolve them," Pollen said.

From the beneficiary perspective, Joseph Samukaya emphasised the importance of expanding training to include a clearer understanding of the consequences of loan default. "The trainings we received were sufficient to help us implement our projects successfully as a cooperative. However, there could be added value in training that explains what

happens if a cooperative defaults, particularly the implications around collateral and repayments," Samukaya noted.

Looking Ahead

As SAIPAR moves into 2026, its policy and governance work will continue to balance institutional independence with proximity to implementation. The objective remains unchanged: to shift policy discourse from aspiration to execution, and from recommendations to results.

Cheelo explained that SAIPAR will continue focusing on economic, social, political, and legal governance, while introducing science and technology as a fourth strategic pillar. With development partners that include UNDP, the World Bank, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and several UN agencies, SAIPAR also plans to deepen collaboration with government ministries and civil society organisations in the year ahead; helping bridge the gap between advocacy and evidence.

As SAIPAR celebrates 20 years, its leadership is struck by how swiftly time has passed. Founder Muna Ndulo is no exception. Dedicated to advancing evidence-based policy and nurturing Zambia's research culture, the years have been measured more in impact than in timelines.

In an interview with the Newsletter team, Muna looked back on SAIPAR's humble beginnings, the commitment and dedication of a team that values of honesty, rigour, and integrity that built the research powerhouse we know today. Below is the transcript of the interview:

Q. What inspired the creation of SAIPAR and what gap in Zambia and Southern Africa's policy landscape were you trying to address?

A. The inspiration came from discussions with some colleagues both in Zambia and at Cornell and especially, at the time, one of the chief economists of the World Bank.

The World Bank and the IMF produce many countries' reports. However, while these reports are just one of many for some countries, most African countries' reports from these institutions become the only point of reference. Researchers from these institutions also want feedback which most times is not available. So, there was this gap of little or no research taking place and I was deeply troubled by this. I believe that Africans must cultivate the culture of research to counter misinformation, but more importantly, to add our voices and knowledge to what impacts us. So, I listened very intently when they are discussing this issue at one of the workshops I attended here and later at the United Nations in New York. I came to realise that when you're discussing issues at government level or even at international level, the input of local expertise is almost zero, there is no local research material to use and as a result, decisions are made based on studies which are done by people who are from outside. Western universities and western publications wield

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a lot of influence on current thinking on Africa although well meant, their analysis is oftentimes shaped by their background, experiences, and beliefs. When you look at Zambia 20 years ago, there was no serious institutions that was doing research on policy issues across the board. At UNZA, in the days of [Lameck] Goma for example, research was strong. There was the Institute for African Studies, and it predated the establishment of the University of Zambia. It was created in the 1950s. The early anthropological studies on Zambia by leading scholars like Elizabeth Coslon, Max Gluckman and Clyde Mitchel, were all done from that institute. However, when the university was created, it took it over but unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, it quickly became low key in terms of research production so there was a gap, and I always thought we needed something which could address this gap. No country gets policies right when it does not have factual data and ideas that are discussed; how do you know what are the options and what is possible? Planning without research leads to waste of resources.

So, I remember discussing these issues with Manenga and initially, we both knew this was an innovative idea, but the next question became how are we going to do it? I was more of the risk taker. I have always believed in Mandela's view that "Everything seems impossible until it is done." Of course, you worry about whether you have funds to begin and sustain such an enterprise. At an African Studies Association meeting in New York, a momentous stroke of luck, I met Marja, Hinfelaar. She lived in Zambia and conducted research, but we had never met. Her paper at the ASA on Zambia was informative and researched. I discussed with her my idea of establishing a research institute in Zambia.

She was very enthusiastic but warned that the problem with such ventures is that oftentimes they become personalised and, in the end, fail to take off. I assured her that would not happen with me. So, from then on, I began drafting documents and then incorporated a company, SAIPAR. The name SAIPAR came from Manenga. The logo was created by a friend and a former research assistant at Cornell, Sarah Lulo, and Marha Fitzgerald. SAIPAR was initially located at Bishops Road at a United Church of Zambia building and moved into its own campus. We now have beautiful campus on District Road, Ngwerere, Chongwe.

“ I have always believed in Mandela's view that 'Everything seems impossible until it is done.' ”

It was helpful for me that I was quite involved, from its beginning, in what has become a NGOs a leading South African Gender Organisation; Gender Links. It has branches in most of the SADC countries. I chaired the Gender Links Board for 10 years. Colleen Lowe Morna founded it. I met Colleen during our time working on the transition from apartheid to Democratic South Africa (1992 -1994), I was working as Political and Legal Adviser to the United Nations Observer Mission to South Africa UNOMSA) and Colleen was advisor to the Commonwealth Observer Mission in South Africa. Colleen is one of the most hardworking people I have ever met. After the 1994 elections in South Africa, both the UN and the Commonwealth closed the missions. She decided to leave her job with the commonwealth

and remained in South Africa. Eventually, she became the first CEO of the Gender Commission in South Africa and when she left that job, she started Gender Links and invited me to collaborate with her. Her work has made Gender Links one of the largest women's organisations in South Africa (with branches in Zambia, Malawi, and Mauritius). Gender Links was responsible for SADC protocol on gender. Another experience which shaped my thoughts on academic research institutions and their role in research and policy is when I served as director of the Institute for African Development at Cornell University. During my 14-year tenure as director, I initiated programmes such as the Distinguished Africanist Scholar, Internship programme, and the Special Speaker Series to expand the discussion and debate on innovative approaches to Africa's development. This experience reinforced my belief in the need for an Institution like SAIPAR in Zambia.

Q. What were some of the challenges you faced in the early days?

A. I think initially, the challenge was resources (rent, equipment, transportation, etc). It was difficult as there were many personal sacrifices of resources, time, and effort., Mandela's quote that 'everything seems impossible until it is done,' was a sort of mantra for me. One of the most critical areas is to identify and have the right people to work with and I was lucky that Manenga and Marja were available to work and were as enthusiastic as I was in bringing this to reality. Manenga, Marja, Caesar, are the pioneers of SAIPAR. Lister Mandubansi joined us to help us with administration. We worked together well and we

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Breaking Stereotypes: SAIPAR Intern Delivers Strong Presentation Before MPs



SAIPAR Intern Moojung Wakasaka makes a presentation as Research Associates Charles Simwanza and Mirriam Sichone listen.

chairperson Sunday Chanda appreciated SAIPAR's submissions on budgetary allocations to institutions including the Electoral Commission of Zambia, the Office of the Public Protector, the Judiciary, the Ministry of Justice, and the Human Rights Commission.

"Before you begin with your presentation, I must mention that your paper is very interesting and very well written. We were reading through it before you came, and I must say your reputation has preceded you. Well done in advance," Chanda said.

These sentiments were echoed by Monty Chinkuli, the Member of Parliament for Kanyama, who also commended the clarity and depth of SAIPAR's submissions.

In addition, Mirriam Sichone, a SAIPAR Research Associate, made submissions before the Parliamentary Committee on National Guidance and Gender Matters on budgetary allocations to the Civil Service Commission, Local Government Service Commission, and the Public Service Management Division.

Together, these engagements underscore SAIPAR's commitment to evidence-based policy engagement and institutional excellence, while also demonstrating that when given opportunity, preparation, and trust, young professionals can contribute meaningfully at the highest levels of national decision-making.

and strength in our family and that has been our foundation. I think one thing I can say about myself is that I am nerve governed by envy. I embrace and rejoice in other peoples' successes. The problem I see in Zambia is that we often do not really approach things with rigour and dedication. In life you must be rigorous to address issues and look at things objectively and be fact driven. I would say one of the major problems ...Continues on pg 7

In many institutions, interns rarely move beyond administrative tasks such as making coffee or photocopying documents. It was therefore unsurprising that when SAIPAR Intern Moojung Wakasaka appeared before the Parliamentary Committee on Health, Community Development and Social Services to present budget submissions, several MPs reacted with visible surprise, and a measure of scepticism.

Yet despite the hesitation in the room, Moojung remained poised. He delivered a clear, well-structured, and thoroughly researched presentation that demonstrated both competence and confidence. His performance not only

challenged assumptions about the role of interns, but also reflected the depth of preparation and mentorship that underpin SAIPAR's internship programme.

Speaking to the SAIPAR media team about the experience, Moojung acknowledged the initial reaction but emphasised the importance of preparation.

"I did notice their surprise after I introduced myself, but I didn't think too much about it because I was well prepared. Charles [Simwanza] offered a lot of assistance during the preparation of the document. While I didn't really dwell on their reaction in the moment, I do wonder, in hindsight, whether they paid as much

attention to the presentation as they would have if I hadn't said I was an intern. Still, it was my first major speaking engagement, and it's encouraging that SAIPAR supports our growth by giving us challenging assignments that push us to read, learn, and improve," Moojung said. The strong showing by SAIPAR's team was not limited to a single committee appearance. Members of Parliament also commended the Institute for the quality of its written and oral submissions.

During a separate session before the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs, Human Rights and Governance, acting

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still work together today. Of course, many others have joined SAIPAR. SAIPAR today has an impressive team of researchers and staff all dedicated to the ideas which informed its founding.

Q. It is quite inspiring how you have collaborated with your brother to build SAIPAR because I know that some families are unable to work together long enough to do something like this. How has it been collaborating with him?

A. In fact, it would not have been possible to have SAIPAR without Manenga, and the others I have mentioned. The reason I say that is because first, he has been wonderful in terms of cooperation but also. At the beginning, looking for a CEO, I needed someone who could work for free (laughs). Of course we don't always agree

on everything but I think the key thing is to be transparent and I think we both recognise that ideas have to be debated and as long as you trust each other, it is important that you have value that guide your life, total commitment to transparency and the truth, I think that helps a lot. My late mother always stressed unity

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in Zambia is that fact and fiction are interchangeable in discussions, people produce fiction and present it as fact in debates. Another thing that bothers me is that public intellectuals do not seem to realise that they have a responsibility to be truthful and honest. We have some public intellectuals, who are not rigorous, they do not respect facts and are not driven by objectivity. At SAIPAR, we have the responsibility to be truthful and we emphasise on evidenced based research.

“I would say one of the major problems in Zambia is that fact and fiction are interchangeable in discussions, people produce fiction and present it as fact”

Q. One thing about SAIPAR, and I have observed this in yourself, in Prof Manenga, Marja and others, is humility. You treat people well and you insist that you do not want people to call you by your title, how do you think such a type of organisational culture plays into inculcating a good working environment?

A. I think it is very important in an organisation to value people for what they are and also, to make sure that you respect people and treat them with dignity and that even when you differ, you still maintain respect for each other. Being hang up on titles, it is quite interesting for me because Professor Goma was the first Zambian to be the Vice-Chancellor at the University of Zambia, I respected him so much and some of the things, I learnt from him. He really set the university on the right path and on this question of humility, I remember one time he was saying ‘you know, if you have a PHD, you go to Kalingalinga, you go with someone who has just finished high school, the high school guy will be the one wanting to make sure that there is a distinction between himself or herself and the people of

SAIPAR at 20: “Learning Through Humility”



FILE PICTURE: (l-r) Marja Hinfelaar, Manenga Ndulo and Muna Ndulo

Kalingalinga. You create unnecessary barriers. People will know that have a PhD but not mentioning that does not take away your doctorate. Sometimes, people become ineffective in their communities because of craving to be recognised; you are very conscious about being recognised, about being this and that, and that just gets in the way of discovering truth and being effective. I think to me, a true intellectual should have no fear that you will be mistaken for someone uneducated, no. But there is this idea that you must be known, you must be called Professor everywhere, I do not know why one needs that. And the other thing that Goma always told me is that ‘you must be humble because you cannot always be right. If you are always right, then you are probably a genius but remember that in the world, the percentage of geniuses is small, maybe one per cent, so it is more likely that you are a fool and there are many of those. Also, I once came across a mantra by John Wooden which has guided my life. He said, “Talent is God given, be humble. Fame is man given, be grateful. Conceit is self-given, be careful.” A work colleague of mine in Vienna also always told me that ‘each time you think you know everything, you should take a walk in the library then you will

see all these books you have never read and you say ‘oh my God, there’s a lot I don’t know’, so that humbles you because you realise there’s a lot out there you do not know. It is also true what they say that “the greater the artist, the greater the doubt. Perfect confidence is granted to the less talented as a consolation prize”. So those experiences and beliefs have always influenced my life. People should respect each other and treat each other as human beings and give people dignity, people require that.

**“Talent is God given, be humble.
Fame is man given, be grateful.
Conceit is self given, be careful.”**



FILE PICTURE: (l-r) Caesar Cheelo, Marja Hinfelaar and Muna Ndulo

They need that to be effective – you can only be effective when you are in an atmosphere where you are really happy, because when you are happy, it leads to very high productivity – even mentally, you think very well – you don’t worry about all kinds of things.

Q. SAIPAR is now one of the biggest research centres in Zambia and it has a unique blend; law, politics, and economics. Why this unique blend?

A. When I started teaching law, I taught Criminal Law and I wrote a book which they still use in Zambia on Criminal Law but after that, I started teaching Evidence, then Corporations, I then moved to International law and investments and now I teach Human Rights, International Criminal Law, Law and Social Change and Investments law. So I have always been guided by the principle that problems don’t come in compartments, there’s nothing like a purely economic problem or a purely legal problem, you need to have a cross cutting approach and that’s why I think that the idea of SAIPAR is good, you have these units working together, of course you can overdo it and end up diluting what you are doing but I think we have the right balance, we have economists there, we have lawyers there - no problem comes in compartments, they are always intertwined. Of course, what we should be doing going forward is sharing our experiences especially in the southern African region, try to reach out to Botswana, Zimbabwe, which was the idea

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SAIPAR Honours Supreme Court



About three years of hard work came to fruition on October 21, 2025 when SAIPAR launched a book entitled “The Supreme Court of Zambia at Fifty, Looking Back and Going Forward”.

In this publication, SAIPAR brought together leading legal scholars and practitioners to produce a landmark publication which examines how the Court has shaped Zambia’s legal and constitutional landscape.

The book, which was edited by Pamela Towela Sambo, O’Brien Kaaba and Chanda Chungu, explores the court’s jurisprudence across a wide spectrum; from human rights and public health to environmental protection and constitutional interpretation, tracing how its decisions have influenced the nation’s governance and democratic evolution.

Ireland’s Ambassador to Zambia Aidan Fitzpatrick graced the book launch, highlighting the need for Zambian legal scholars to publicise their work and share articles and case reviews to inform the wider legal

profession, both in Zambia and across the region.

“It’s great to be here. We’ve been strong and proud supporters of SAIPAR for some time. It is an honour to be part of this event and I think it is important that Zambian starts to build a body of scholastic work to inform and advance legal practise both in Zambian and across the region. I think it captures very well the important role of the Supreme Court for 50 years and it highlights substantive cases that have informed legal practices in areas such as corporate law, employment contracts, alternate dispute resolution, land tenure, religious diversity etc,” said Ambassador Fitzpatrick.

Meanwhile, Zambia Open University School of Law Dean of Students Munyonzwe Hamalengwa, who wrote Chapter 23 of the book, said he hoped other courts would also be highlighted in subsequent publications.

The Supreme Court of Zambia at Fifty, Looking Back and Going Forward is available for purchase [here](#).

ZambiaLII’s Growing Role in Zambia’s Legal Landscape

Under its Law and Justice Division, the SAIPAR manages the Zambia Legal Information Institute, widely known as ZambiaLII (ZamLII). Over time, ZambiaLII has established itself as Zambia’s leading open-access legal information platform, providing a reliable and growing collection of court judgments and legislation.

ZambiaLII serves a wide audience that includes legal practitioners, judicial officers, researchers, and university law students. Its core mandate is to ensure free, accurate, and timely access to legal information, while steadily building a comprehensive and authoritative database of Zambian legal materials. In doing so, ZambiaLII contributes directly to improved legal research, transparency, and access to justice.

Key Highlights in 2025

- Launch of the ZambiaLII Newsletter, with the inaugural issue published in March 2025, strengthening engagement with the legal community and stakeholders.

- A major usage milestone, with over 100,000 website visits and user actions recorded in August 2025 alone, reflecting growing reliance on ZambiaLII as a trusted legal resource.

Looking Ahead

ZambiaLII’s growth underscores the increasing demand for free access to law in Zambia. Going forward, SAIPAR hopes to deepen collaboration with the judiciary, legal professionals, academic institutions, and development partners to support the long-term sustainability of free access to law.

By bringing more stakeholders into the free access to law movement, ZambiaLII aims to strengthen Zambia’s legal ecosystem and ensure that justice is informed by knowledge that is open, accessible, and reliable.

The Southern African Institute for Policy and Research (SAIPAR) is excited to announce the launch of the SAIPAR Podcast, a new platform for thoughtful conversations on policy, governance, law, economics, and development in Zambia and across Africa.

The podcast will feature engaging discussions with leading scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and emerging voices, creating space for evidence-based dialogue on the issues shaping our societies. Through accessible and in-depth conversations, the SAIPAR Podcast aims to bridge research and public discourse, bringing rigorous analysis closer to

everyday policy conversations. This new initiative reflects SAIPAR’s commitment to expanding its public engagement and strengthening knowledge sharing beyond traditional academic formats. Listeners can expect timely insights, diverse perspectives, and conversations that connect research to real-world challenges and opportunities. We invite our community to tune in, share, and join the conversation as we grow this exciting new platform.

Subscribe to our [Youtube](#) Channel and follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [X \(Twitter\)](#)

INTRODUCING



THE SAIPAR
PODCAST

EVERY OTHER
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14:00



SAIPAR at 20: “I’m Proud of the team”

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right from the beginning. In our advisory board, we did invite people from other countries, and I think we should continue to do that. Even with the case analysis, I always encourage [O’Brien] Kaaba that we should try to get cases from Botswana, Namibia, which we now do, we now have someone from Namibia who writes case reviews and two South African students who’ve written about three now, we need to encourage that because it will help the region. It is critical to me to have this mix because they bring in the expertise and we share experiences. Knowledge knows no boundaries.

Q. How has SAIPAR managed to remain independent and credible in a politically charged and polarised policy environment?

A. I think you do get that kind of environment in most places, but what saves an organisation is to be very committed to truth and transparency so that you have nothing to hide, that is the critical thing. I did a lot of peace keeping in Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Timor-Leste. One thing that I learnt from there is that when there are warring parties, you have to be above board; if I have a meeting, I will tell the others that ‘I am going to have a meeting with the other people on this and this’ so that it doesn’t come to them as a rumour that ‘you know, last week, he met so and so’, you make it public so that they know. And I think that’s critical because misinformation does a lot of damage to people. Being committed to rigorous screening of your programmes and your publications being reviewed by others, which is critical. I have never published anything unless I show it to two, or three colleagues to read and advise. So, transparency is key and being above board and not taking any sides because you can only be of service to both sides if you are completely transparent; it is difficult but you have to earn that



Some SAIPAR members of staff during the 2025 end of year party

reputation that you’re actually focussed on truth and research. But in some African settings, it is difficult because truth and fiction are often interchangeable, half the time you must deal with correcting misinformation, things which are not even there and now social media and AI worsen it. This is even affecting the legal profession. In the US, a few weeks ago there was an interesting case of some lawyers who prepared a legal brief with the assistance of AI. Unfortunately, the brief, had citations of some cases which the judges later discovered do not exist. The lawyers were personally penalised with huge fines. Undiscovered, this would have gone into the legal system as fact. So those are some of the big challenges, as well as quality control, that you have a way within SAIPAR to control the quality of your products and make sure that there’s concern about such occurrences; the quality must be consistent and of high quality. Of course there is no organisation that does not make mistakes; but there are things you can do to control quality. Always remember that integrity is the one thing that only you can keep and only you can give away. Once you give it away, you can never recover it.

Q. What moments or achievements make you proud of SAIPAR’s journey so far?

A. I am proud of SAIPAR and its work in positing fact-based research to advance Africa’s development. The SAIPAR team has built an organisation with a stellar reputation, and it is beginning to get world recognition in terms of its status and output. Colleagues from around the world, researchers and post-doctoral fellows from academic institutions have come to SAIPAR to work with Zambia-based researchers. For me, this has not come, a surprise because the people we have at SAIPAR are excellent people. But it takes a long time for an organisation to get respect in terms of internationally and otherwise, and SAIPAR seems to have achieved this in a remarkably few years. SAIPAR turns 20 next year and its products are of extremely high quality, and they are relevant to policy, they impact governance and they are helpful. Overall, I am amazed that it has come so quickly but this is evidence of hard work and commitment.

Q. What are some of your dreams for SAIPAR’s future?

A. I think what we need to do more of is community projects, to have some service, we discussed some of these issues, for example, with children’s rights, how they actually interact and have some kind of pro-bono programme where we could represent kids, I think things like

that. Training the police, for example in Zambia, where the training is infused with human rights norms and rules will be beneficial to the country. If you look at the curriculum at Lilayi, my father was once officer commanding for Lilayi so he oversaw the training school, the training routine is mostly about policing. If you compare it to the training of the army, you will see that the army is required to learn the laws of war including the Geneva Conventions, it is part of the curriculum and worldwide, that’s why soldiers know what not to do in terms of conflict. In Zambia, the police do not have exposure to these things, so it is important to conduct short courses for the police to know about rights and responsibilities under laws and conventions. So going forward, we could think of some community things we can do but I think we can make sure it is done in a transparent and non-political way.

Q. Any concluding thoughts?

A. Thank you for the opportunity to reflect and, just to thank all of you at SAIPAR, you are doing a wonderful job and let us continue to do the best we can. SAIPAR’s strength is in its people who remain uncompromising with the truth, competent in their knowledge, and resilient and committed to the advancement of knowledge.

Maria Kasoma on Professional Growth at SAIPAR



As I continue reflecting on the roles I held in 2025, this article focuses on my time as an Assistant Programme Officer at the Zambia Legal Information Institute (ZambiaLII). The role offered a practical engagement with access to justice through the everyday work of making the law understandable and freely available to the public.

As part of the free access to law movement, ZambiaLII provides a central platform through which Zambian law is made publicly accessible, including judicial decisions, legislation, statutory instruments, and gazettes. Hosted by the [Southern African Institute for Policy and Research](#) and part of the AfricanLII network, ZambiaLII supports transparency, accountability, and legal empowerment for both legal professionals and the public.

In this role, I contributed to the digitisation, optimisation, and publication of judgments and legislation, with close attention to accuracy, usability, and ethical considerations, including the redaction of sensitive cases involving children. For many users, ZambiaLII remains their first and sometimes only point of access to the law.

I also supported the preparation of bill [summaries](#) and [case summaries](#), contributed to a quarterly legal [newsletter](#), and worked on Legal Insights, which are fictionalised stories addressing

common legal challenges while encouraging engagement with the legal profession.

The work extended beyond desk-based tasks and included engagement with members of the Bar and Bench, as well as institutions such as the National Assembly and the Anti-Corruption Commission, contributing to the collaboration required to sustain reliable legal information systems.

This role strengthened my ability to bridge law, technology, and public-facing communication, while developing skills in legal research, digital publishing, stakeholder engagement, and ethical decision-making. I am grateful to my colleagues at ZambiaLII and SAIPAR, and to my supervisor, for their guidance and support. Working within a small, dedicated team reinforced the value of collective effort in sustaining public-interest legal infrastructure.

This experience reinforced my belief that making the law accessible extends beyond technical work and contributes directly to justice, accountability, and inclusion in Zambia.

I now turn to reflect on a quieter, but equally deliberate commitment I made in 2025 to improve my oral presentation and public engagement skills. While much of my work in 2025 involved research, writing, and technical legal outputs, I was equally intentional about developing the ability to speak clearly, listen attentively, and facilitate meaningful discussion.

Throughout the year, I took on opportunities to moderate meetings and discussions, engage diverse audiences, and guide conversations on social and policy issues. Most recently, this included [moderating](#) the public engagement for the YES Initiative and hosting episodes of the [SAIPAR podcast](#). These spaces required adaptability and confidence when engaging participants with deep expertise

in their field and potentially differing perspectives and lived experiences.

Each engagement reminded me that effective oral communication is a combination of speaking, creating space for dialogue, and ensuring that discussions remain inclusive and productive. The process sharpened my facilitation skills, strengthened my confidence, and improved my ability to communicate ideas in a way that is accessible and respectful.

I am grateful to my colleagues and collaborators who trusted me to lead these conversations and who offered encouragement, feedback, and support throughout. Their willingness to share platforms and engage openly made these learning moments possible.

Ultimately, these experiences showed me the importance of public discourse in shaping policy, fostering democratic participation, and contributing to informed debate and decision-making in Zambia.

In sum, this is a brief synopsis of the many roles, responsibilities, and learning opportunities I took on in 2025. Each experience, in different ways, stretched me, refined my skills, and reinforced my commitment to thoughtful and engaged work.

As we commence 2026, I am also reflecting on one of the most perspective-building roles I had last year, which was serving as a research assistant on the Grassroots Youth Empowerment Support Initiative under the Zambia Democratic Governance Project, implemented by the [Southern African Institute for Policy and Research](#) (SAIPAR) with support from the [Ford Foundation](#). The initiative sits at the intersection of governance, youth empowerment, and economic transformation. Its importance to Zambia's development landscape cannot be overstated. Equipping young people with skills and a voice is essential to inclusive and sustainable development.

In this role, I supported the project across its full lifecycle. My work included designing and supporting data collection tools, participating in field surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions, cleaning and analysing data, and contributing to reports. I was also involved in organising and supporting capacity-building workshops for youth, assessing needs, measuring impact, and supporting embedded technical assistance and oversight visits. Alongside this, I provided administrative and coordination support to ensure the smooth delivery of project activities.

As a lawyer by training, this role allowed me to meaningfully bridge law, policy, and development practice. I strengthened my skills in socio-economic research, monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and collaborative project delivery, while deepening my understanding of how legal and institutional frameworks shape development outcomes on the ground.

I am deeply grateful to SAIPAR for the opportunity and for the trust placed in me, and to the project leadership and wider team for their guidance, professionalism, and collegiality. This was truly a team effort, and I learnt a great deal from working alongside committed researchers and practitioners who care deeply about Zambia's development.

I remain eager to continue learning and to grow further. I am open to opportunities for collaboration and development in the areas reflected throughout this article, and beyond.

Thank you to everyone who has followed along, supported the work, and contributed to the conversations.

SAIPAR Launches SEDROBZ 2026 Project to Strengthen Electoral Justice in Zambia

SAIPAR has officially launched the Support to the Electoral Dispute Resolution Oversight and Capacity Building Zambia (SEDROBZ) 2026 project, an initiative aimed at contributing to strengthening the credibility, transparency, and inclusiveness of Zambia's electoral dispute resolution (EDR) system ahead of the 2026 general elections.

Building on lessons from recent election cycles, the project responds to growing concerns around disputed petitions,

procedural inefficiencies, and limited institutional capacity in the adjudication of electoral disputes. SEDROBZ 2026 seeks to address these challenges by improving access to justice, strengthening institutional frameworks, and fostering public confidence in the electoral process.

The launch event, held under the theme "Advancing Access to Electoral Justice," featured a keynote address by Irish Ambassador to Zambia Aidan Fitzpatrick, the signing of

Memoranda of Understanding Tracker; a centralised database designed to analyse and track election petitions. Implementation of SEDROBZ 2026 will be led by SAIPAR in collaboration with key partners, including Chapter One Foundation, the Christian Churches Monitoring Group (CCMG), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the Zambia Centre for Inter-Party Dialogue (ZCID).

Over the next two years, the

project will deliver research, policy recommendations, capacity-building programmes, and technology-enabled tools to support fair, timely, and legally sound resolution of electoral disputes; contributing to peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections in Zambia.

Look out for more information on this project in our next edition but for now, enjoy the photo focus from the event on page 12.

Turning Waste into Energy: Advancing Sustainable Food Production Through the REHEATZ Project

Recovering Embedded Heat in Zambian (REHEATZ) Food Production is a collaborative Irish-Zambian research and innovation project focused on advancing wastewater heat recovery (WWHR) in Zambia's food industry. The project seeks to improve both the economic and environmental sustainability of food production by identifying practical opportunities to recycle waste heat generated during industrial processes.

Wastewater heat recovery allows food-processing companies to reduce reliance on coal and other fossil fuels by capturing and reusing thermal energy from wastewater streams. This approach improves on-site energy efficiency, lowers production costs, and significantly reduces carbon emissions, air pollution, and thermal pollution, offering a compelling pathway toward greener industrial operations.

Funded by Research Ireland and Irish Aid, the REHEATZ project commenced in January 2023. Since then, the research team has conducted extensive site visits to medium and large food-processing companies across Zambia, including Coca-Cola Beverages Zambia and Zambeef Products PLC, to assess energy use patterns and identify viable heat recovery opportunities.

In 2024, the project achieved a major milestone with the construction of a pilot WWHR system at Zambeef Huntley Farm in Chisamba. Building on the pilot's success, a fully integrated, full-scale heat recovery system was installed at the same site in May 2025. Data from the system indicates expected annual energy savings of approximately 100 MWh compared to pre-installation baselines; demonstrating both economic and environmental value.

Beyond energy efficiency, the project has also delivered important skills and employment outcomes. The construction of the full-scale system was undertaken in partnership with Build-It International (BII), creating green job opportunities for Zambian youth and strengthening local technical capacity in clean energy technologies.

Regional Engagement and Market Development

In June 2025, the REHEATZ team travelled to Cape Town to undertake a Market Scoping and Analysis, exploring opportunities for regional expansion, identifying potential partners, and assessing the competitiveness of wastewater heat recovery technologies



The researchers and the wastewater heat recovery system. Courtesy Eleanor Mancusi-Ungaro

across Southern Africa. This engagement strengthened cross-border collaboration and informed the project's long-term commercialisation strategy.

National visibility was further enhanced through participation in the Zambia International Trade Fair, where the team showcased WWHR technology and its benefits to energy-intensive industries, policymakers, and potential adopters. The project also featured at the Agriculture and Commercial Show, engaging agribusinesses, environmental experts, energy regulators, and technology partners.

Learning, Skills, and Social Impact

To assess knowledge transfer and socio-economic outcomes, the project conducted baseline and midline surveys in April and October 2025, respectively. The baseline survey, administered before installation of the full-

scale system, assessed prior knowledge of heat recovery technology among Zambeef boiler operators and BII graduates involved in the installation process. The survey also used the Poverty Probability Index to evaluate the economic status of participating BII graduates.

The midline survey, administered to the same groups, examined how the technology influenced daily operations, workload, safety, and boiler efficiency at Zambeef Huntley Farm. For BII graduates, the survey assessed the learning experience gained through hands-on participation, focusing on technical skills acquired and implications for future career development.

Together, these findings highlight the REHEATZ project's contribution not only to cleaner industrial energy use, but also to skills development, youth employment, and sustainable industrial transformation in Zambia.

**SEDROBZ
Launch Photo
Focus: pictures
by Mukosha
Funga**



**Irish Ambassador to Zambia
Aidan Fitzpatrick**



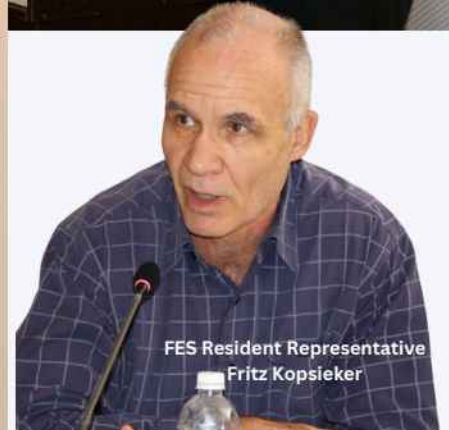
**SAIPAR Executive Director
Manenga Ndulo**



**AU ECOSOCC M&E official
Abraham Asha**



**SAIPAR Associate Director, Law
and Justice Tinenenji Banda**



**FES Resident Representative
Fritz Kopsieker**



**SAIPAR Executive Director Manenga
Ndulo and CCMG Program Director Peter
Mwanangombe shake hands after signing an
MoU**



**SAIPAR Executive Director Manenga
Ndulo and ZCID Executive Director
Doreen Njovu Kabwe sign an MoU**



**SAIPAR Executive Director Manenga
Ndulo and Chapter One Foundation Executive
Director Josiah Kalala shake hands
after signing an MoU**

SEDROBZ 2026



**Participants pose for a photo during
the SEDROBZ 2026 launch on
January 23, 2026**



**Operation Young Vote
Executive Director Guess
Nyirenda**



Look out for our next edition in July...